

March 21, 2015

Dear Team Leaders:

I wish to be the first to welcome you and your congregation to the 46th Annual Lads to Leaders National Convention, and I personally look forward to seeing each and every one of you. As we come back together as family, how can it be anything other than a great weekend as we celebrate the accomplishments of our youth and acknowledge our blessings from the one and only living God?

NOTE: There is information on pre-payment on page 3 as well as an announcement and information on page 5 about a special showing of the new L2L documentary that was filmed last year during convention.

However, the purpose of this letter is to provide you with basic information to help you navigate through the convention allowing us to focus on the things that are important and not on the things sometimes necessary. This letter will provide you with information on special events, reservations, the check-in process, rooms, paying your bills, hotel services, and even loading and unloading your luggage. This is a large convention, so, to minimize your stress to the extent possible, we ask that you share appropriate information with your group and that you bring this letter to Nashville for future reference.

SCHEDULE AND CHANGES

There are no major changes to the convention! The schedule is the same as last year and again there will be four colors. Everyone should know their color by now, and if you don't, then it is very important that you know your color in the near future. If you have been in the same color for the last two or five years that may change this year. So please take a look at your assigned color, and if it is changed, understand that it may change the order of events for your group.

We are maintaining the awards ceremonies in the evenings the same as last year, and we have left the 2±hour downtime between the last event and the awards ceremony to gather our thoughts, move into the rooms, find something to eat, change for the evening ceremony, or listen to one of the singing groups. All judges' meetings are on Friday with the morning and afternoon events (Art, Scrapbook, Puppets, Debate, Oral Bible Reading) being at or near noon and the Saturday events (Speech, Song Leading/Songs of Praise, Bible Bowl) being in the afternoon before the Friday evening awards ceremony. Please remind everyone to attend their judges meeting, and if you can't judge please find a replacement. We will need every judge.

After the award ceremony on Friday night there will be a **DEVOTIONAL** at the fountain in the Delta atrium for the whole family. We want to celebrate the accomplishments of our youth; we want to celebrate with our winners; we want to improve the family experience at this convention; but, the last thing we want everyone to remember before they go to bed at night is that "we as a people put God first." A devotional gives us the opportunity to re-focus on the thing that is important and to recognize God, where He has always been – *First in our Lives*.

SPECIAL EVENTS

We wish to bring special attention to five events:

- **SUNDAY WORSHIP:** We hope you can stay over and participate in one of the highlight experiences of the Convention, the Sunday morning 8:00 AM Worship Service conducted by young men from the various congregations. Please come to the service and realize that we are not alone as over 8,000 like-minded Christians assemble to worship the Lord. Please remind everyone that we will celebrate the accomplishments of our Lads/Leaderettes on Friday and Saturday Awards Ceremonies, but this time is a worship period and come mentally prepared to worship our God.
- **ADULT ORIENTATION.** The adult orientation meeting is in the Delta BCD (Blue Division) Ballroom. The meeting is from 10:00-11:00 on Friday Morning. The room can hold 2800 adults so approximately half of the adults from each of the congregations can attend; but, it is requested that at least two team leaders from each congregation be present. This meeting will be used to convey information, especially

changes that have occurred since the brochures were printed, to introduce the coordinators for the different events and special needs, if any. Please attend the meeting if anyway possible.

- **CONGREGATIONAL SINGING/DEVOTIONAL.** In years past, we have had a congregational singing devotional in the fountain area of the Delta Conservatory on Friday night which will be continued this year.
- **ANNUAL LEADERSHIP MEETING.** The usual leadership meeting that has taken place on Saturday afternoon will be replaced this year with the showing of the L2L documentary video. Annual reports will be made available to those who want them.
- **CORNERSTONE:** Faulkner University has long been a large supporter of the Lads to Leaders program, including offering numerous scholarships. This year the a cappella singing group “Cornerstone” from Faulkner University will be singing on Friday evening in the Governor’s Ballroom B from 6:00-7:00.

ARRIVAL

Most of us travel a great distance to attend this Convention, and upon arrival most of us just want to get settled as quickly as possible. However, your rooms may not be available upon your first arrival, especially if you arrive early. It is recommended that you leave your personal items, clothing, luggage, and other things that we travel with in your vehicle until you know the area where your rooms are located. Please park first and then unload after you get your room keys. The Cascades entrance should only be used if you are using valet parking or are using Bell Services to unload your vehicle and transport your things to your room. After you know the location of your rooms, please use the closest of the following locations to unload:

Delta Portico

Magnolia Portico

Garden Conservatory Canopy

Presidential Portico

LUGGAGE STORAGE

It is unacceptable to leave personal items unattended in common areas of the hotel; such as the Cascades Lobby, hallways, etc. Please consider leaving the luggage in secured locations, i.e. car, trailer, etc. or at the back of the Tennessee Ballroom which is a secured room until your room is available. Remember that this room will be in use for the Friday and Saturday night award ceremonies so please remove your personal items prior to that event. Also note that if you do decide to abandon your luggage in a common area or in the Tennessee Ballroom after 6:00 PM on Friday and Saturday, there is a great possibility that it will be moved to the valet’s luggage storage area, and unfortunately you will not have a claim ticket. Locating unattended luggage after it is moved is a very difficult, time consuming adventure, and it makes for a lousy way to start the weekend.

CHECK-IN

This year, there will be conventions leaving the hotel on Thursday and Friday, so some rooms will be affected on both days. After the rooms are vacated by the previous guests, they have to be cleaned and readied for our arrival. Therefore, no rooms should be expected before 3:00 PM on Thursday or Friday. In an attempt to minimize the time that we wait in line to check into the hotel, there is an alternate check in procedure for Thursday and Friday arrivals that is included with this letter. Please refer to these sections for the detailed information.

PROBLEMS WITH A ROOM

For incidental changes in the room such as keys don’t work, finding an unclean room, no roll-away bed, etc., please contact the Cascades Registration Desk for assistance. If there is a major problem with one of your rooms, please go to the Lads Information Booth and ask for a Lads Representative for assistance. Please do not return to the Tennessee Registration desk which is used for group check in because they may not have the equipment or ability to address a problem with a single room or a single request. We have also asked that if all of a group’s rooms are not available by 4:00 to do a partial release of the rooms that are available. If a partial release is performed then instructions will be provided as to the method to obtain the remaining room keys when you receive the partial release.

Please also remember, that the team leader or hotel room coordinator for your group are the only ones that may pick up the group’s keys. There are a couple of reasons for this: (1) for security for Lads to Leaders and for the hotel, and (2) in years past, individuals arriving early have managed to pick up keys for the group then were

unavailable when the main group arrived. The second reason has caused group members to get stranded until the person with the keys was eventually found. So if you have a person within your congregation that wants to arrive early and take care of getting the room keys for the group, identify them as the hotel room coordinator.

PAYMENT

You should have received an invoice from the Opryland Hotel for the rooms that your group has requested for the weekend. If you have not, please email Stacey Eakes at seakes@gaylordhotels.com to request the invoice. Please provide your group's name, city, state, etc. so that he can efficiently process your request. The first person checking in for your group will be required to pay at check-in before you receive your keys. It is requested that the team leaders have a single check from the church, credit card or cashiers check. **Remember no personal checks will be accepted.**

Pre-payment will make check-in much easier. Details for pre-payment should have been included with the invoice. Contact Stacey Eakes with questions or if you need assistance.

The room keys will be available at the Tennessee Registration Desk, and you will be handed your keys after your congregation has been posted on the white board adjacent to the check in area and payment for the rooms is made. The benefit of this is a reduction in the amount of time that you are at a counter at the hotel, and it will also shorten the time for all that may be behind you. If you cancel the room fewer than 5 days prior to your group's scheduled arrival date, you will be charged at least for one night for the late cancellation. If you cancel two days before the convention, you don't have a room (because it was cancelled), but the hotel is not obligated to refund your money. If something comes up at the last minute, and you can't attend, please consider finding someone to go in your place because you may not be able to get a refund.

If there are individuals that insist on paying their own account by credit card separate from the group, then it can be accomplished in one of the two methods:

- Make a photocopy of both sides of the user's credit card, and clearly print all the account numbers as well;
 - Attach a signed release statement by the card holder to the hotel to use the photocopy to post payment for your account;
 - Include this photocopy along with the team leaders pre-payment for the rest of the rooms. Send the photocopy and payment as instructed on the Opryland invoice.
- The second option is to go through the line with your team leader, and as he makes payment for the entire group, submit your card as payment for your particular bill at that time.

Please note that you will not be able to use your church's tax exemption status if you pay individually. In order to be exempt from part of the taxes, you must pay by check or credit card in the church's name.

EXTRA CHARGES BILLED TO THE ROOM

All charges (room service, movies, etc.) will require a credit card be presented at the desk first prior to the services being performed. This includes outside phone calls from the rooms. No "Adult" rated movies will be turned on even with a credit card. There will be two bottles of water furnished to each room for each day's stay, and this is included in your room fees; however, any requests for extra bottles of water will be charged to your room.

FIGURING THE HOTEL BILL

Our rooms will be billed at a rate of \$151.94 per night (tax exempt) and \$166.16 per night (non-tax exempt) – based on our calculations. You may claim the tax exempt rate if you have a tax exempt certificate from the state of Tennessee. If you requested specific rooms, i.e., garden view rooms, parlors, suites, etc., then there will be special room rates associated with these requests that were made known to you when you registered. Rollaway beds are available upon request at check-in, but because of current Tennessee fire codes only one can be added to a room and one cannot be added to a room with two beds. If a rollaway bed was added at the hotel's option to convert a room with king size bed to accommodate three people in the room, then there will be no additional charge for the rollaway. Lastly, due to Tennessee fire codes no more than 4 people are allowed in a room.

PARKING PASSES

Self-parking at the hotel is \$20.00 per day/vehicle for anyone not staying at the hotel. For those staying in the hotel the cost of self-parking has already been included in your room rate. When entering the self-parking lot, take a ticket from the machine (or swipe your room key after you are checked in). **Note that the entry and exit gates to the self-parking lots will be down. At all times while we are onsite, there will be two L2L designated exit gates that will be open for exiting. If you have to exit at a manned gate, identify yourself as with the Lads to Leaders convention, and you will be allowed to exit with no problems.** If you choose to use valet parking, the charge will be \$28 per day and will be charged to your room. **All vehicles with trailers and oversized vans/buses MUST use Lots E, D or B ONLY for parking. DO NOT enter the regular self-parking lots with a trailer or oversized vehicle. Lots E, D and B are for oversized vehicles and those with trailers ONLY.**

SUNDAY MORNING CHECK-OUT

Since all rooms were prepaid at check in, and there are no parking pass charges on individual rooms, the check out process is greatly simplified - especially if a credit card has been placed on account for any Extra Charges that may have been placed on the rooms.

- Inform someone from each room to check the television in their room on Saturday afternoon or evening to see what extra charges have been added to the room. Make arrangements to pay these on Saturday evening, or night, or face a line on Sunday morning.
- Be sure the room leader checks the television again on Sunday morning to see that the room is zeroed out with no extra charges. If any charges are present someone from that room must go to the Cascades counter and pay the balance.
- The team leader should check to assure that all room charges have been paid. If all charges have been paid, then phone call the Cascades Main Desk and inform them that your team is leaving the hotel. If all rooms in your group cooperate then the counter can be bypassed entirely. If you have to wait in line on Sunday morning, please remember that it could have been avoided.
- Also, at checkout the luggage should **NOT** be left unattended in any common area of the hotel. If you check out of the room and decide not to leave immediately, either move your luggage to your vehicle or have the valet services check your luggage until you are ready to depart the hotel.

LOADING OUT OF THE HOTEL

In an attempt to minimize the congestion leaving the hotel, please load out of the hotel at the following locations that are the closest to your rooms (please use Cascades only if utilizing Bell Services or Valet Parking):

Delta Portico
Magnolia Portico
Garden Conservatory Canopy
Presidential Portico

AWARDS CEREMONY SEATING

There will be four awards ceremonies - Red, Blue, Green and Yellow ceremonies in the Delta A, Delta BCD, Presidential and Tennessee Ballrooms, respectively. There will be between 1900 and 3000 people in each of the ceremonies, and all the ceremonies will occur at the same time. Lads to Leaders/Leaderettes wants each person in attendance to have the absolute best time at these conventions, but with this many people in a single room, we ask that you remember that we are Christians and please be courteous to our neighbors. Please sit with your groups, don't move the chairs, and please don't use the chairs as stools.

BEHAVIORAL ISSUES

Jesus taught His disciples how we are to treat our fellow man using the Parable of the Good Samaritan. Lads to Leaders has an event that bears the same name, and it teaches us to be considerate of others. This weekend is a celebration of Leadership, and we ask that you be considerate of others in the way that we dress, act and conduct ourselves.

- **Dress** - We claim to be leaders, and within the Christian community as a whole, we hold leaders to high standards. Team Leaders please convey our expectations of this high standard of behavior and dress at the national convention and encourage those in attendance to follow these guidelines. The

dress standard for the Friday night and Saturday night awards ceremonies is generally more formal, and we ask that the young men and women dress as Christian young leaders in modest clothing. Please **NO** strapless, backless, short, tight, dresses or pants, no sagging pants, and no clothing with un-Christian messages or pictures should be worn. Please respect yourselves and your congregation by dressing appropriately for the occasion.

- **Conduct** - We ask that the young people remember who we are and what we are about. Please conduct yourselves in accordance with the highest Christian standards. Young leaders, if you are given special freedoms, please earn the trust given to you by your parents and team leaders and encourage each other to seek that which is good and to do the things that are right.
- **Television** - We cannot turn off HBO and other such channels without totally blocking all television in all rooms. You need to discuss this with your students and ask them to be on their honor to not watch programs that contain bad language and sexual situations.
- **Curfews** - We should avoid noise and late night traffic in the halls and gardens, and students need reasonable curfews that are established by your congregation. Nashville has a city ordinance regarding un-chaperoned youths under the age of 18 years of age that basically states that they are not to be on the streets or other common areas after midnight on weekends. Scriptures teach us that we are to be in subjection to the “laws of land,” so we should not have any under-aged, un-chaperoned leaders in the common areas or halls after the curfew. This does not mean that the under 18 leaders are not allowed to be in common areas after midnight; it just means that if they are, they should be supervised by a responsible adult of an appropriate age.

FOOD

Stax “Build Your Own Burger” and Paisano’s will serve pizza and other related items on the Delta Island, and there are other specialty eating areas located within the hotel. Additionally, a food court area will be present at the Presidential Lobby that will provide items for those with young families that have more, let’s say, discerning taste. There will again be an option in the Presidential Lobby as in the past for quick items like chicken finger, hamburger, pizza, etc.. This option will **ONLY** be available for lunch on Friday and Saturday from 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM. The Opry Mills mall, with its food court, is another option for those with a little more time.

SPECIAL FILMING DURING CONVENTION

During the 2014 convention, a crew was onsite to film all aspects of convention and interviews with lots of staff, volunteers and attendees. The premier showing of the video will be in the Delta A Ballroom at 5:00 PM on Friday. A second showing will be on Saturday at 6:00 PM in the Delta A Ballroom. We encourage all who can to attend the presentations. DVDs will be available for sale at the showings and also at the Information Booth after the first showing on Friday. These will be a great tool to share your love and excitement for this program with friends and family.

FINAL THOUGHTS

This convention is unique in many ways. What makes it most unique is that we place our hope in God and try to live in accordance with His teachings. This weekend is about children and our desire for them to be imitators of Christ. Please stress to your group the instructions contained in this packet, and we look forward to a wonderful weekend together. As my last thought for this letter, I want everyone to know that God will be present and watching us this weekend because 2 Chronicles 16:9 states “... the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His.” I look forward to seeing everyone one of you this year because when I am with you, I know that my God is closest to me because our hearts are completely His. I hope you feel the same.

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THURSDAY CHECK-IN PROCESS

There are conventions in the hotel that will be exiting at the same time that many will be arriving so there may be a delay in obtaining your rooms. Rooms may not be available until after 3:00 p.m.; however, the hotel will strive to get everyone in their rooms as quickly as possible. Please assume that your room will **NOT** be available before 3:00 p.m. For those arriving early, an attempt is being made to avoid extremely long waits in the Cascades Lobby for check in. The following alternate Group check in process is offered for the time period of **1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.** If the group leader arrives after 6:00 p.m., please go to the Cascades lobby to obtain your groups keys.

Luggage Storage: Luggage may be temporarily stored in the Tennessee Ballroom. This area is a secure area. Please **DO NOT** leave luggage in lobbies, hallways, garden areas, or any other common area within the hotel.

Upon Arrival: Periodically monitor the marker board in the Tennessee Lobby for your group's name. The hotel will utilize a "traffic light" notification process that was used last year. A red dot indicates no rooms, check back later. A yellow dot indicates that a rep for the group needs to get in line to speak with a desk employee. A green dot indicates that your groups' rooms are ready and to get in line to get the keys.

Pre-Paid Rooms: (1) Team Leader - Check in with hotel registration at the Tennessee Lobby Registration Desk and identify your group.
(2) Provide the hotel with your correct hotel room registration list. This is a printout of the online registration hotel list. This list will **NOT** contain the room numbers. So, make sure you have a copy for your own use. Collect your group's keys at the counter and enjoy the rest of the evening.

Non-Prepayment: (1) Team Leader - Check in with hotel registration at the Tennessee Lobby Registration Desk and identify your group.
(2) Provide the hotel with your correct hotel room registration list. This is a printout of the online registration hotel list. This list will **NOT** contain the room numbers.
(3) Receive your room voucher from the Tennessee Lobby Registration Desk. (NOTE: You will not need a voucher if checking in after 8:00 p.m.)
(4) Take your voucher and proceed to the Cascades Registration Desk with a means to pay the bill for the total block of rooms that you are claiming. Pay for the total block of rooms with a single check from the church, credit card, or cashiers check. **Remember no personal checks will be accepted.**

Claim Your Keys: Only the team leader or the group's designated hotel coordinator may claim the keys. If you pre-paid, you will be provided your group's keys at the Tennessee Lobby Registration Desk. If you did not pre-pay, the team leader or the group's designated hotel coordinator will have to take the voucher to the Cascades Lobby Registration Desk to obtain the keys. In either location, the entire group's keys will already be packaged with the room number individually marked on the sleeve.

Late Arrivals: There will always be late arriving members of individual groups. To minimize the lines at the check-in counter to the extent possible, it is requested that the team leader or designee keep and hand out the keys until 9:00 p.m. After 9:00 p.m., the remaining keys may be returned to the Cascades Lobby desk, and the late arriving member would then claim their individual room key from the desk upon arrival. The rooms will have to absolutely match the name of the arriving member; **NO ROOM SWITCHING** can occur if keys are returned to the desk.

Individuals: Sometime during the weekend, it is recommended that someone from each room secure the room with a credit card for incidentals that may be charged to the room. If you do, this will be the one and only time you have to go to the registration desk and lines at check-out can be avoided.

FRIDAY CHECK-IN PROCESS

- Luggage Storage: Luggage may be temporarily stored in the Tennessee Ballroom. This area is a secure area. Please **DO NOT** leave luggage in lobbies, hallways, garden areas, or any other common area within the hotel. The ballroom will be in use at 7:30 p.m.; so, please move your luggage to your room (or if your room is still not available move the luggage to a room within your group or to bell services) prior to this time.
- Upon Arrival:
- (1) Team Leader register at the Delta Lobby C Registration window. Registration begins at 8:00 a.m. Pay any outstanding Registration Fees.
 - (2) Obtain your group's registration packet. Inside the packet is a red, blue, green, or yellow slip identifying your group's color. This is a needed item to claim your room keys.
 - (3) Periodically monitor the marker board in the Tennessee Lobby for your group's name. Refer to previous page for details on the notification process to see when you need to get in line.
- Pre-Paid Rooms:
- (1) Team Leader - Check in with hotel registration at the Tennessee Lobby Registration Desk and identify your group.
 - (2) Provide the hotel with your correct hotel room registration list. This is a printout of the online registration hotel list. This list will **NOT** contain the room numbers. So, make sure you have a copy for your own use.
 - (3) Provide the hotel the color registration slip from step (2) above.
 - (4) Collect your group's keys at the counter and enjoy the rest of the evening.
- Non-Prepayment:
- (1) Team Leader - Check in with hotel registration at the Tennessee Lobby Registration Desk and identify your group.
 - (2) Provide the hotel with your correct hotel room registration list. This is a printout of the online registration hotel list. This list will **NOT** contain the room numbers.
 - (3) Provide the hotel the color registration slip from step (2) above.
 - (4) Receive your room voucher from the Tennessee Lobby Registration Desk.
 - (5) Take your voucher and proceed to the Cascades Registration Desk with a means to pay the bill for the total block of rooms that you are claiming. Pay for the total block of rooms with a single check from the church, credit card, or cashiers check. **Remember no personal checks will be accepted.**
- Claim Your Keys: Only the team leader or the group's designated hotel coordinator may claim the keys. If you pre-paid you will be provided your group's keys at the Tennessee Lobby Registration Desk. If you did not pre-pay, the team leader or the group's designated hotel coordinator will have to take the voucher to the Cascades Lobby Registration Desk to obtain the keys. In either location, the entire group's keys will already be packaged with the room number individually marked on the sleeve.
- Late Arrivals: There will always be late arriving members of individual groups. To minimize the lines at the check-in counter to the extent possible, it is requested that the team leader or designee keep and hand out the keys until 9:00 p.m. After 9:00 p.m., the remaining keys may be returned to the Cascades Lobby desk and the late arriving member would then claim their individual room key from the desk upon arrival. The rooms will have to absolutely match the name of the arriving member; **NO ROOM SWITCHING** can occur if keys are returned to the desk.
- Individuals: Sometime during the weekend it is recommended that someone from each room secure the room with a credit card for incidentals that may be charged to the room. If you do, this will be the one and only time you have to go to the registration desk and lines at check-out can be avoided.